

by the private and public sectors working together to create those much needed jobs, but essentially putting America back to work.

I recently received a letter from one of my constituents, and I think this sums up the feeling of America. I want to read her words because they tell the story of all too many Americans:

"I'm worried, afraid for myself and all in my situation, and saddened. If I still have not been hired to work in the next few weeks, I will lose the financial ability to live in a room or an apartment and will lose the parts of my life that literally had to be placed in storage, most notably my family photos of my deceased parents, of my children, due to the lack of income or savings to pay the rental fees. I have no one who will take me in or who can afford to do this."

She went on to say, "How can you not agree that this is comparable to a natural disaster when individual lives are at stake and left as if to be swallowed by an abyss of dark uncertainty?"

These are the people of our country who we are sworn to serve. This debate is important on the floor. The debt ceiling could be lifted tomorrow, but the pain and agony of the American people are stated more eloquently by the people who are actually suffering, and when she says "to be swallowed up by an abyss of dark uncertainty," that is a moral obligation for us. Rather than talking about staying here over the weekend to make sure we deal with the debt ceiling and all the machinations that are going on between the two Chambers, let's stay here till we put America back to work. That's what we should be doing: out-innovating, out-building and out-educating the rest of the world.

RESTORING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had a very vigorous debate about the unsustainable debt that our country is facing, and we passed a bill, the Cut, Cap, and Balance bill. That bill is really the only one that's been on the table, House or Senate, so far.

So we asked in the Senate, where's their proposal? We asked the White House, give us a proposal that the Congressional Budget Office can actually give us a score on, on how we're going to do this. We need legislative language to move forward on these things. We can't just base things on speeches, as has been said yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this country is at a very pivotal point in its history. There's no question about it. We're at a pivotal point. We can decide, is the United States going to lead in the 21st century as it did in the 20th century and in the 19th century, or will we be swallowed in a sea of red ink, high un-

employment and very sluggish growth? That is the basic fundamental problem we're faced with today.

It's within our power in Congress to make policy decisions that will change this equation for the good or the bad for the American people. We have decisions to make, tough decisions. And it's time. It's time to make those decisions.

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Now yesterday we debated the unsustainable debt problem that this country is facing, a situation that is going to swallow up savings for every single American, currently, \$46,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country; and it's rising. And that doesn't count the unfunded liabilities.

So the debt is clearly a problem, and we have to set the country on a sustainable path with a credible plan to move us forward. But there's another side to the problem that's not being talked about enough, and it's the fact that we are not growing this economy. We are not growing private sector jobs. The previous speaker, my friend from Connecticut, talked about the plight of so many who are without jobs. We have to grow this economy if we're going to create jobs, and that means having a well-thought-out energy strategy for the United States. It means fundamental tax reform to put us on a very competitive footing, whether it's a small business or a large U.S. company, and it also means a very aggressive trade strategy for the United States.

Now I want to talk about trade for a minute because it really does not get enough discussion here in this body. I got some very encouraging news just last week from the World Trade Center of New Orleans, in my home State. It released some quarterly trade figures. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2011, exports from Louisiana manufacturers and farmers grew by almost 50 percent compared to the previous period last year. This is incredible news because Louisiana is rapidly transforming its economy into a global trading economy that helps our farmers, helps our manufacturers. We sell to the world. We create private sector jobs that pay better than the average jobs around the United States. One out of five jobs in Louisiana is related to international trade where we export. This is critical. If we're going to grow this country and grow private sector jobs, we need a trade strategy in place to do this, to help it, to open markets overseas for our farmers, our manufacturers, our small businesses.

We're seeing rapid growth in Asia and South America right now, all based on trade. Hundreds of trade agreements have been basically voted upon in these countries and implemented. Regional trade agreements. Here in the United States, it's been 4 years, and no activity. We have three pending agreements right now: Panama, Colombia, and South Korea. These will basically open

markets in countries that are already having pretty much unfettered access into our market. These will create, by the President's own estimate, 250,000 jobs in this country. Those are direct jobs in the short term. That doesn't even speak to the number of jobs that will be created going forward. It is critically important that we move forward on this. There will be \$13 billion in exports from these three agreements alone, exports. These are American companies, American farmers selling their goods overseas. This will stimulate growth in this economy and job creation. This is why we need to move forward on it.

But there are other important aspects to this. These three agreements were negotiated in good faith. And so just like the full faith and credit of the United States is on the line with regard to dealing with our debt problem, our credibility internationally is on the line as to whether we're going to be a leader in this world or we're just going to sit back and shrink and see high unemployment and sluggish job growth and lost opportunities for our children and grandchildren. That's what's at stake with this.

These three trade agreements need to be done now. The President could easily send these to Congress, and we can vote on them. That's what we need to do. That's a step forward to restore American competitiveness, to restore American credibility, and to restore American confidence. Come on, Mr. President, lead.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

IN GOD WE TRUST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. A previous speaker referred to our distinguished Speaker pro tem with that historic name and was suggesting that we look for something to guide us that would be over the podium. What I see is "In God We Trust," not the Congress, not the House, not Democrats, and certainly not Republicans, but in God we trust.

Recently, I took this to be a very serious thing. I was saying that in the process of increasing the debt ceiling and cutting back spending, that a lot of people were vulnerable, and I called upon our spiritual leaders not to forget them. And, indeed, whether we're talking about Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid, that all of these things were going to be on the block, subject to being cut. The press said that I was calling upon Jesus to help Democrats.

Well, that's not so. I was calling upon religious leaders, whether they were Christian or Protestant or Jewish or Gentile or Mormon or Muslim to say